

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

THE LIFE OF HENRY IRVING.

HENRY IRVING. A Biographical Sketch. By AUSTIN BRERETON. Svo. pp. 156. Scribner & Welford.

Mr. Brereton's tasteful and comprehensive sketch of the professional career of Henry Irving, which was published a short time ago in London by Mr. David Bogue, has been reprinted here, under an agreement with the author, by Messrs. Scribner & Welford; and the American reprint is even a handsomer volume than the English original. Mr. Irving is, just now, so much and so widely an object of public interest in this country that the story of his life cannot fail to be eagerly sought. This memoir was authorized by himself, and it may therefore be accepted as the standard work on this subject. The author, Mr. Austin Brereton, is a young journalist of London, a man of truth, taste, fine talent, industry and gentle feeling, and of special experience in the theatrical field. For some time past Mr. Brereton has been employed as the assistant to Mr. Clement Scott, of the London *Theatre*, magazine, and of *The Telegraph*,—one of the most popular and trenchant, as well as one of the ablest, of contemporary writers upon the stage,—and in this kindred positions he has accomplished much useful work. The volume for 1882 of that capital series called *Dramatic Notes*—which gives an epitome of the history of current theatricals in London, year by year—was written by Mr. Brereton.

In this sketch of Henry Irving the biographer has pursued the only course that is practicable for the writer of the memoir of a man still living, and still in the public gaze. He has written from the standpoint of sympathy and honest admiration, simply and sincerely, neither yielding to his own enthusiasm nor striving to make a display of his critical faculties and doctrines. The aim has been to present, in a terse style and a condensed form, all the essential facts and documents that constitute, describe or illustrate Mr. Irving's career, and the biographer has thus produced a useful and interesting work, showing his subject and not himself. Mr. Irving, he tells us, was born February 6, 1838, at Keinton, near Glastonbury, in Somersetshire, England, but passed his childhood in Cornwall, of which county his mother, Miss Behenna, was a native. He was an only son. Mr. Brereton's account of the early life of his subject is especially fresh and pleasing, both in the brightness of its picture of an original, ambitious, spirited lad, and in the literary skill with which it is written. Mr. Irving's advent on the stage was made in 1856, at Sunderland, and on September 21, 1859, he made his first appearance in London; but it was not till 1863 that he settled permanently in the British capital. The first ten years of his professional career were full of hard work and of vicissitudes, as is usual in the life of an actor. Then circumstances began to crystallize more favorably around him, as commonly happens when an earnest character fulfills itself in steady, persistent development and industry.

In 1871, Mr. Irving was engaged by Mrs. Bateman at the Lyceum Theatre, and there he made his brilliant hits with *Alfred Jingle* and *"The Bells"*, and had various later successes with the London public, among them being *Charles I. Bichieau* and *Hamlet*. Here also he restored Shakespeare's "Richard III," to the English stages—as had previously been done in America by Edwin Booth, an actor whom Mr. Irving first saw, by the way, in 1869, at Manchester, and whose influence upon his taste and style was more considerable than the especial followers of Mr. Irving are likely now to concede. In 1878 Mr. Irving became manager of the Lyceum Theatre, and that position he has ever since occupied, with honor to himself and great benefit to the public and the people of London. Mr. Irving says that Mr. Irving has acted 6,000 parts, first and last, which certainly is a remarkable record of labor in a career of twenty-seven years. The biography gives, also, much other interesting theatrical material, and is supplied with a thorough index and is furnished with several portraits of Mr. Irving in character. It is a thorough piece of work, as far as it goes, and will be of great assistance to thoughtful readers who would rightly appreciate the impression that Henry Irving has made upon his time.

CHRISTMAS PUBLICATIONS.

A volume of flower poems by well-known writers has been edited by Susie Barstow Skelding, and published by White, Stokes & Allen, under the title of "Flowers from Hill and Dale." The editor has provided various brightly colored portraits of the flowers, and these have been further utilized in a pretty "Flower Song Series," the few poems of which are enclosed within the popular silk-edged paper covers.

The November and December numbers of *St. Nicholas* have been bound together within a brilliantly colored cover, this being made a mine of happiness for the little people. It is intended as a holiday gift book for those who do not regularly see *St. Nicholas*.

Mr. Fenn's edition of Gray's "Elegy" has been published in an attractive shape by Roberts Brothers. Many of the drawings were made by the artist at Stoke-Poges, and most of them are as poetic as the text. The verses which the author rejected from his later editions are printed at the end of the volume.

Roberts Brothers have brought out a handsome new edition of Mrs. Dodge's fascinating story of "Donald and Dorothy." The book bids fair to become a juvenile classic, and it is in all ways worthy of the fine paper, printing and illustrations of this edition.

"The True Story of Those Dreadful Mouse Boys" (Charles H. Whiting) is more or less allegorical and suggestive of the naughty behavior of real little bad boys. The story is told with much humor and gentle feeling, and will be a cause of endless pleasure—all imaginative children.

Coupled Knox has constructed from many careful and expansive narratives an interesting volume in his series of "Boy Travellers." It is entitled "Adventures of Two Youths in a Journey through Africa" (Harper & Brothers), and it concludes a series which many youngsters have delightedly followed. The illustrations of the book are gathered from many sources.

An admirable book for boys is Mr. Ellis's "Ned in the Block House" (Porter & Coates). It is a story of the closing years of the last century, and though full of fights with Indians and hairbreadth 'scapes, is thoroughly wholesome in tone.

The Christmas cards of Messrs. Raphael Tuck & Sons are this year of unusual beauty. Flower clusters, exquisite in color and arrangement, figures, humorous and pathetic, handsome animals, sea, garden and woodland scenes—all manner of beautiful devices in fact—are represented on these dainty cards. The publishers have more than sustained the high standard of former years.

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"This clever booklet, which has excited not a little comment both in London and Paris, is announced as the work of an anonymous French author." The tone of the book is generous and many of the critics might reasonably be those of an Englishman of cosmopolitan tastes and experiences and radical tendencies; and one withal who owns a quick sense of humor. The satire is keen, but not ill-natured."—Yesterday's Tribune.

Twenty large editions have been sold in Paris, and the first edition of the authorized translation—now published simultaneously in England and America—the London publishers write has been exhausted in advance of publication.

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